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# OBSERVATIONS

ON

## RELIGIOUS FANATICISM;

ILLUSTRATED BY

A COMPARISON OF THE BELIEF AND CONDUCT  
OF NOTED RELIGIOUS ENTHUSIASTS

WITH

THOSE OF PATIENTS  
IN THE MONTROSE LUNATIC ASYLUM.

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BY

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# OBSERVATIONS

## ON

### RELIGIOUS FANATICISM.

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THE healthy exercise of the sentiment of Veneration enters so intimately into many of the amenities of social life, and constitutes so important a part in religious creeds and religious observances, that it has become a habit, a fashion, a point of orthodoxy, to regard some of its most erratic and extravagant manifestations as akin to virtue, if not as virtue itself. That sentiment, from which spring filial obedience, patriotic subordination, and the humility of the sincere worshipper, is held to be of too sacred a nature to be susceptible of excess, and of too beneficial a tendency to be susceptible of over-cultivation. It at first appears monstrous and absurd to affirm that the utility of such a feeling may be defeated, and the peace and harmony of society disturbed or endangered, by its predominance in the mental economy. Yet the paradox which seems to be conveyed in the proposition, that the ends and purposes of Veneration, in common with those of all other feelings, may be nullified by its exercise and encouragement, is not only reconcilable with history, but is itself a historical truth. The fire which warms, may and must consume us if too largely and liberally fed; and the feeling which is the torch to guide us heavenward may dazzle and dim the inward eye by its intensity, until the path to be pursued or the power to pursue it is lost. We do not here speak of the aggregate sentiment of religion: the rational and practical character by which it is distinguished affords an unexceptionable guarantee

that in it and by it all interests are consulted ; and, as human perfectibility is its object, that excess is impossible. We speak of one of its ingredients, of veneration or mere devotional piety, and of its cultivation to the exclusion of that reason which examines and recognises the truths, and of those principles which dictate the duties, of the gospel. Divest a man of the hundred ties of love and friendship, justice and mercy, by which he is bound to his fellow-men ; strip him of every attribute of reason save a blind and submissive perception of a high and mighty intelligence ; and leave but a strong instinct to venerate and worship : or do what produces results precisely similar—educate this solitary feeling ; teach that in its activity, in acts of adoration, there is supreme happiness ; rouse and stimulate it by rewards and punishments ; appeal to it by every mode, through every channel by which such a feeling is accessible—until the moral equilibrium is destroyed—until the trinity of truth and mercy and praise is disunited—until the counsels of judgment become as inaudible as the “ still small voice ” of conscience : do all this, and you will have established that condition, that vicious excess of Veneration, to which allusion has been made, and of which it is designed to treat.

By a singular perversion of religious education, a great portion of the time and talent of those to whom this trust is committed has been directed to the accomplishment of this very end. This error has proceeded rather from the alliance of religion with a false philosophy, and consequently from erroneous views of the powers which it is intended to cultivate, than from erroneous views of the real objects of religion. Veneration, or the propensity to worship, has been looked upon, and correctly, as the natural effect of spiritual-mindedness : but it escaped observation that this feeling may and does exist, altogether independently of the latter disposition ; that it is in no degree commensurate with the strength of that disposition, and accordingly may never warm the bosom, or warm it imperfectly, while that disposition is in constant operation and regulating the whole conduct. It is, in fact, a mere feeling of reverence, abstract from all knowledge or practical excellence ; which in uninstructed minds leads to the worship or profound adoration of some being, the nature of which is determined by extraneous circumstances ; and which, in minds improperly instructed—that is, taught to consider adoration even as the amount of Christian duty—leads to that fanatical enthusiasm which places in jeopardy the cause upon which it is engrafted. Enthusiasm is the tropical sun of the religious feelings, and fanaticism may be called the fever-heat to which the moral temperature will rise.

A whole nation or nations, engaged in ritual observances, in internal experiences, in adoration, to the contemptuous neglect of

every other object, would be a striking phenomenon ; but it is one which the world has more than once been on the verge of witnessing. Such a catastrophe could only arrive by long perseverance in a discipline which would keep this feeling in constant excitement, by making its gratification a part, and the principal part, of the happiness of each individual,—by creating it into the golden way whereby immortality might be attained, and by substituting its dictates for better and nobler guides. What may be styled the religious idiosyncrasies of particular periods have often threatened a visitation of the condition described : but, more than all others, the several Crusades, the reign of Charles V., and that of Cromwell, serve to exemplify the features and results of such an event. There appears to have been at those times an epidemic mania of the religious feelings. But, without venturing to insist upon so harsh a construction, it may be stated, that certain periods have become signalized by the supremacy and inordinate activity of the sentiment of Veneration. An excess of devotional feeling is thus created into a pivot upon and around which all previous and succeeding events revolve ; and in place of recalling these by allusions to, or details of, civil and political changes, we speak of the age of the Crusades, of the era of the Reformation—in other words, of Veneration acting as the mainspring in the grand machine of human affairs. Other motives, it is admitted, baser or better, contributed to the production of these and similar religious movements. But while in them, as in all grand and vital agitations of the mass of mankind, there will be found to have mingled, in governing, guiding, modifying, or increasing, all the passions, propensities, prejudices, and degrees of enlightenment under which the component members of that mass ordinarily acted ; still the main impulse of the majority can only be recognised in intense devotional feelings. It may be perfectly true that the wars styled Holy, which first assimilated Christianity in spirit to the ferocious creed they were intended to crush, which tinged every river, from the Thames to the Bosphorus, with the blood of the best and bravest sons of early civilization, and which, in seeking the possession of one empty and surreptitious sepulchre, filled hundreds of thousands—it may be perfectly true that these pious emigrations were in keeping with, and emanated from, that spirit of chivalry which distinguished the age, and converted the dominant church into a species of half-military, half-monastic feudalism. It is not less true, however, that blind, unresisting, unquestioning bigotry—respect for the doctrines, and subjection to the commands of the church—and that deep and romantic reverence which comprehended every tradition of whatever degree of authenticity, every relic, and every spot of earth connected with early Christian history,—in



short, an excess of veneration,—were the chief moral agents which put in motion and animated the cohorts of the Cross. On the other hand, it is immaterial although the origin of the Reformation can be traced to the squabbles of two indulgence-vending orders of monks, or the society of the Jesuits to the broken leg and personal vanity of Ignatius Loyola ; since the cause by which these striking manifestations of moral power were sustained and directed was so obviously an enthusiastic veneration for holy things ;—in the former case, accompanied by reason and conscientiousness—in the latter, it may be, with these allies, but assuredly with Wonder, Ideality, Cautiousness, and Secretiveness. We are free to confess, that while we view in these heart-stirring scenes much of that veneration which is catholic to all stages of the world's progress, and which is commendable wherever it may appear, we see much—ininitely more—of that extravagance and unhappy combination of feeling which with propriety can be classed only with disease ; sanctified, perhaps, by its symptoms, but in its character essentially disease. In retrospective analysis, such events must not be estimated by their consequences, or through the medium of modern feelings and opinions : we might as rationally compute ancient distances by statutory measurements. That secret lever must be sought for which gave them impetus and direction. We must endeavour to look on history as we look on histrionic representation ; and, identifying ourselves with the feelings of the actors, forget for a moment that the Crusades *proved* the antidote to the universal spread of Mahomedanism, and remember only that they were frantic or fervid ebullitions of religious zeal, uncombined with the eternal dictates of justice, and in open defiance to the suggestions of reason. In like manner, we must turn our eyes from the blessings which were bought by the Reformation, and narrowly scan the miseries and follies of fanaticism by which that purchase was attended. In the latter scrutiny, it cannot fail to be observed how beautifully the antithesis of human opinion is illustrated, and the identity of human feeling proved, by the deeds of Loyola and Luther at the two extremities of the empire. Both of these men were devotees ; sincere, superstitious, and, in the eyes of their contemporaries, sane : but were many of the dogmas which they promulgated broached in the present day, little faith would be placed in the clearness of the understanding from which they sprung. The present day does not lack superstition ; but things are now called by their proper names, and deprived of all mere conventional value. The very same opinions and actions which in the good old times—the middle ages, the period of Catholic supremacy, for example—entitled a man to the reputation of a devotee, and a place in the calendar of saints, now condemn him to the charge of insanity.

and confinement in a madhouse. However much diversified the fates of the holders of such tenets may be by the spirit of the era in which they live, the identity of their religious feelings, and the similarity of the effects of these, cannot be disputed. The never-changing attitude, the fixity of feeling, or the monotony of some incoherent exclamation, may be substituted, in the cell of the maniac, for the rigid severity of penance, the million-times repeated ave or credo, which sanctified the cell of the monk ; but the principle to which such manifestations can be traced back continues to be the same—a profound sentiment of prostration and adoration before some almighty power, undirected by a rational contemplation of the attributes of that power, and uninterrupted by those impulses of charity and love which such a contemplation would indicate as acceptable offerings at such a shrine. But Catholicism must not be stigmatized as the only faith which impregnates the mind with this description of fanaticism ; for, although the crown of canonization has lost its efficacy as a stimulus and its attraction as a reward, the spiritual elation and self-satisfaction of the devotees of other creeds are perhaps as intense and as little justifiable as those elicited by the conviction that this much-coveted crown was within the grasp.

These reflections were suggested by the following observations. Among the inmates of one of the immense hospitals for the insane in France, there was, some years ago, a woman who proclaimed herself a Jesuit, and who, in the anxious hope of expiating imaginary crimes, exhibited a course of real suffering and punishment. She alternated penance with prayer, and prayer with penance : her form was emaciated by a rigorous abstinence ; her limbs bled and festered from constant kneeling ; her tongue never ceased to murmur some consecrated name or pious ejaculation ; and her whole conduct, so far as such gradual self-immolation admitted of any thing but a negation of evil, was blameless and beautiful. Her derangement was nothing but excessive devotion. Such a spectacle forced upon me the reflection, that had this woman lived and presented such claims to sanctity in former times, she would inevitably have been regarded and revered as a saint, and, in place of coercion and medicine, would have received incense and adoration. In the same vast lazaret-house of mental disease and decrepitude, was a ward which, from the number of holy personages it contained, was designated, in derisive discrimination, "*La Salle Sainte.*" Here were gods christian and pagan ; the resuscitated shadows of former saints, and substantial aspirants to the same title ; the founders of new religions, and the defenders, prophets, and martyrs, of old ;—a motely assemblage, which, if at liberty, and placed in circumstances congenial to the development of their

exaggerated feelings or the fruition of their ambitious projects, might have attained to the same unenviable moral distinction and political power as Mahomet, or Mesner, or Loyola, or other enthusiasts of higher pretensions and more modern date.

Instruction is said to have been derived from comparing the career and character of distinguished men of different ages; thus establishing historical parallels or portraitures of the prominent features of particular and often widely-separated epochs. Psychological parallels drawn between such minds as those to which allusion has been made, and the real actors on the stage of life who are influenced by similar motives, cannot fail to be interesting and instructive, especially if care be taken to ascertain and estimate that course of events, and that impress of the time, which invests the same attribute at different seasons with dignity or dishonour, and calls that human wisdom during one century which is stigmatized as insanity in the succeeding. A very humble attempt will now be made to put this suggestion in practice, by contrasting the conduct of men by general consent regarded as lunatics, and as such under my superintendence, with that of others who have long stood, or still stand, high in the estimation of their fellow-men. The cases to be detailed will serve at the same time to illustrate a fact long since promulgated by medical phrenologists—that insanity generally takes the direction of the predominant organs.

### CASE I.—J. R.

#### *Dimensions of the Head.*

				inches.
From Individuality	to Philoprogenitiveness,	.	.	7
... Ear	to Individuality,	.	.	$4\frac{3}{10}$
... ..	to Philoprogenitiveness,	.	.	$4\frac{1}{10}$
... Cautiousness	to Cautiousness,	.	.	5
... Ear	to Concentrativeness,	.	.	$4\frac{6}{10}$
.. ..	to Self-Esteem,	.	.	$5\frac{1}{10}$
... ..	to Firmness,	.	.	$5\frac{3}{10}$
... ..	to Veneration,	.	.	$5\frac{3}{10}$
... ..	to Benevolence,	.	.	$5\frac{1}{10}$
... ..	to Comparison,	.	.	5

*Predominating Organs*,—Veneration, Concentrativeness, Self-Esteem, and Firmness.

This patient has been insane for thirteen years; but his complaints appear to have undergone a total change during his confinement. His mind became affected while on a voyage to the West Indies and subsequently to an attack of fever. The predominating feelings are stated to have been at that time those of pride and ambition, manifested by delusions as to rank and property. Convinced of his dignified station in society, that of a baronet, and satisfied with the extent of his domains, he expa-



tiated on the magnificence of his possessions, the philanthropy and gigantic scale of his projects, and the respect and reverence which he claimed and would exact. He spoke incessantly of kings and emperors as his intimate friends. His loquacity disclosed that, though prudent, pains-taking, and sensible as a gardener, he would have been extravagant, vain-glorious, and aristocratic in his imaginary character. No record exists of the progress of his malady, or of the transition from the original to the present diseased train of feeling, except what is contained in the words, "from being rather talkative he has now become, in 1832, taciturn." This taciturnity is to be understood to imply rather a paucity of expression than disinclination to speak or a determination to remain silent. In place of being silent, he speaks almost incessantly; at all times, however unsuitable or improper, and upon all occasions, however ridiculous. But his vocabulary is limited to four phrases, which are repeated with interminable iteration. The religious character of these ejaculations affords evidence that, at the period of the cessation of his loquacity, a change took place in the direction of his feelings—that Veneration had become powerfully excited, and derived gratification from paying that devotion to the Supreme Being which formerly found an object in riches and high rank; and that Self-Esteem had ceased to operate, or, relinquishing the pleasures of aggrandizement, revelled in those of the enthusiastic and inflexible votary.\* The words consist of a sort of invocation, uttered in complete abstraction of every external impression, and evidently with intense elation and satisfaction. He repeats, "Bless God; bless the heavens' God; bless the Holy Bible; and bless the Psalm Book;" in a whining supplicatory tone, with the eyes fixed on the skies, the hands raised, and the whole attitude and expression of the body conveying the idea of concentrated devotion. A fakir never succeeded more thoroughly. During the whole day his only occupation is to walk to and fro, or to stand statue-like engaged in this worship. His meals offer but a momentary interruption. They are dispatched with great rapidity, as if salvation depended on the resumption of his devotional exercises, which are repeated at every pause. The most inclement weather produces no alteration: the pitiless storm descends on his bald head unheeded; his aspect and orison continue the same. When addressed in the ordinary tone and mode of salutation—when flattered, threatened, entreated, commanded—his reply varies not; and although plainly shewing by his look of pleasure or fear, and by his act of obedience, that he understands what is said, he acknowledges it no further than

\* Dr. William Gregory examined the head of this individual in my presence, and immediately decided upon the generic character of his insanity, designating it "religious madness."

by "blessing God." To an utter stranger and to his own parent his deportment is the same. His sententiousness does not depend, moreover, as in some lunatics, upon an incapability of uttering, or forgetfulness of certain classes of words; for he possesses a Psalm book preserved with the greatest care and anxiety in his bosom, which he can occasionally be induced to read. But even in this instance his powers are limited to a single stanza. No persuasion can lead him beyond this favourite passage, Psalm civ. verse 1, which, it is singular, commences with "Bless God, my soul," and must have been selected on this account.

Some striking and rather ludicrous illustrations have occurred of the intensity and strength of this morbid disposition. Although despairing of any cure or even alleviation, I concluded that, could the latter be effected, it must be by forcibly interrupting, by means of some stronger impression, physical or mental, the train of thought to which his mind appeared bound. As the only mode within reach, the shower-bath was had recourse to. While undressing he trembled, and evidently dreaded the experiment, but persisted in his devotions. When he was placed in the bath, a few minutes were allowed to elapse, in order to give full force to the horrors of expectation; the water was then permitted to flow; but even when the stream fell most furiously, instead of the expressions of rage, or petitions for mercy, which are usually heard, he continued to "Bless God, the heavens' God," and so on. Subsequently, when the douche, a still more powerful agent, consisting of a column of cold water directed on the head while the body is immersed in the warm bath, was employed,—and while gasping for air,—his cry was the same. Again, when a cast was taken of his head, and he lay with both head and face enveloped in plaster of Paris, and respiring through tubes inserted in the nostrils, the usual sing-song monotonous hum was distinctly heard, indicating that he was still busied with his self-imposed ritual. This man is docile, innocent, inoffensive, and in the contemplation of his supererogating veneration exquisitely happy; but he is to the apprehension of all insane, and must be cared for as such. His brain had in all probability been injured by the attack of fever, and derangement was the consequence; this derangement taking the direction of the predominating organs, Veneration, Self-Esteem, Firmness, and Concentrativeness. The other powers are obsolete or extinct, and those feelings which must have given to his character its prominent features in health, now constitute the peculiar symptoms of his madness. His disease consists as much in the absence of intellectual operations, as in the intense and sustained excitement of certain feelings. It would be a vain speculation to inquire whether, had judgment continued its su-

perintending and regulating influence, there would have been more than a strong religious bias tending to actions recognised as praiseworthy ; but some interest may attach to the question, whether this state of abstract spiritualization, as it is, would not at certain times, which have frequently occurred, and there is every prospect will again occur, have been esteemed a specimen of exalted and immaculate piety, worthy of all admiration and imitation. Have there not been periods when the man going about saying prayers has been preferred, or at least counted equal, to the man going about doing good ? Is there, in the page of history, no psychological parallel to the case of J. R. ? We believe that there are many.

Such parallels are to be found in times of great excitement, when the mind is led by early education, by the construction of society, and by that atmosphere of moral miasms which is created by public teaching and opinion tending to the cultivation of feelings purely venerative or mystical, to the exclusion or neglect of that philosophical investigation which gives to religion its stability and majesty, and of those sentiments of justice and mercy which give it practical efficacy. The first centuries of the Christian era may be pointed out as one of these periods. The irresistible truth of our Saviour's mission was acknowledged, but by men who, though they had abandoned the principles resulting from an impure and irrational faith, were strongly impregnated with the mode of thinking that resulted from it ; and who, leaving the altar of an "unknown God," still ignorantly worshipped him who was proclaimed—limiting duty to propitiation, and attributing excellence and merit to him alone, who, burying the affections and forfeiting the objects of intelligence, spent his life in praise and prayer. Reason, as applied to religion, was yet in the cradle ; while Veneration, Wonder, Ideality, and the lower propensities, were in the full vigour of maturity.

The cause of asceticism was thus triumphant ; and the extraordinary attempts to achieve a conquest over the stomach, were equalled only by the subjugation of every mental energy to one concentrated impulse. Of this creed Simeon Stylites appears to have been the most distinguished votary. Educated in a monastery—the established austerities of which he put to shame by the ingenuity and novelty of his own devices to torture the flesh, and where it required constant care to prevent him from committing pious suicide—he returned to the world to obtain the martyrdom which he coveted. Erecting a pillar, sixty feet in height, he chained himself to the summit, and, leaving every earthly thought and wish and habit below, devoted himself to adoration. For thirty years he kept this vow. His eye and soul were bent on the skies, and he stood, even at that elevation, unmoved. The intensity of this feeling of Ve-



neration rendered him insensible to impressions from without ; for heat and cold, calm and tempest and disease, found and left him imperturbed and imperturbable. Pain, privation, and silent suffering, however, he did not deem sufficient, and he never ceased to perform acts of devotion. These consisted in praying with his arms extended in the form of a cross, and in bending the forehead to the feet. From these he never desisted. Upwards of a thousand repetitions were counted, following each other in rapid succession. At last his lips and limbs refused to obey the holy desire, and he died in the odour of sanctity, on what may literally be called the pinnacle of his greatness.\*

We may now sneer at this Syrian anchoret, but much may be learned from ascertaining that no such sneers existed at the period in which he lived ; that he was looked upon as most perfectly fulfilling the will of the living God ; that his example was then and afterwards followed by thousands of hermits and ascetics ; and that his conduct furnished a pretext and traditional injunction for the monachism of succeeding ages. At this moment, a small religious community almost realize his self-imposed severity by condemning themselves to perpetual silence, save when offering up the prayers of their ritual.

Yet in what do these enthusiasts differ from the maniac whose history has been detailed ? Had he lived in the same times, or under similar circumstances, would not his singular delusion have been hailed as the fruit of inspiration ? Would not his memory have been preserved and revered as a sacred thing ? Or, to render the contrast more forcible, had Simeon Stylites, his immediate followers, or the Trappistes, been submitted to the same ordeal of examination as my patient—that of common sense—is it not certain that a commission of lunacy rather than a patent of saintship would have been issued in their behalf ?

#### CASE II.—W. C. Æt. 55.

##### *Dimensions of the Head.*

				Inches.
From Individuality	to Philoprogenitiveness,	.	.	8
... Ear	to Individuality,	.	.	4 $\frac{1}{10}$
... ..	to Philoprogenitiveness,	.	.	4 $\frac{3}{10}$
... Cautiousness	to Cautiousness,	.	.	5 $\frac{2}{10}$
... Destructiveness	to Destructiveness,	.	.	5 $\frac{8}{10}$
... Combativeness	to Combativeness,	.	.	4 $\frac{5}{8}$
... Ear	to Concentrativeness,	.	.	5 $\frac{1}{10}$
... ..	to Self-Esteem,	.	.	5 $\frac{5}{10}$
... ..	to Firmness,	.	.	5 $\frac{6}{10}$
... ..	to Veneration,	.	.	5 $\frac{6}{10}$
... ..	to Benevolence,	.	.	5 $\frac{4}{10}$
... ..	to Comparison,	.	.	5 $\frac{2}{10}$

*Predominating Organs.*—Cautiousness, Destructiveness, Firmness, Wonder, and Veneration.

\* See Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, &c. chap. xxxvi.



This patient has been insane for thirty years. His previous history is scarcely known; but from the relations which he sometimes volunteers, it would seem that he was originally a farmer in a remote Highland glen, where fierce passions and dark superstition reigned in primeval power. He speaks of sanguinary feuds and protracted carousals,—of dining with this laird, and taking snuff with another great personage,—and of the familiar terms upon which he stood with the minister; for all of whom he testifies unqualified respect. He is equally at home in discourse, when recounting how such a one was possessed, and how strange and mysterious his own situation is; or when descanting on the horrors of ghosts, evil spirits, witches, and other powers of darkness. Of the symptoms of his malady previous to confinement we are likewise ignorant; but it is probable that his friends were forced to have recourse to restraint, in consequence of the overt act of cutting off the tails of half a dozen cows, which, by this summary process, he proposed to disenchant. The keepers assert that, on admission, he was in a state of furious satyriasis; indulging in the grossest obscenities, and most revolting gestures and practices. The base of the brain is very large. The old ally of mental medicine, intimidation, was tried and with success. His frantic demeanour gave place to a calm, submissive, and obliging manner. The calm, however, is that of subjection, and not of docility; and now, from the native imbecility of his mind, began to appear the prominent parts of his character—a result explained by the small size of the organs of intellect, and his large Veneration and Love of Approbation.

Age and the chronic nature of his disease may have narrowed the circle of his delusions; but within their orbit his mind ever continues to roll, with the fixity of a natural law. His appearance is that of great humility; his reverence for every one around, almost all being in his estimation superior to himself, is profound; his ordinary occupations, for he works most willingly in the service of the establishment, are performed as duties exacted by a master, and are often interrupted by the number of his obeisances; for whenever addressed, his bonnet is raised and his head bent. He is completely under petticoat government, every maid-servant claiming him as a subject. All this bespeaks the predominance and activity of Veneration. But what renders him especially an object of curiosity is his mode of worship. When among his companions he kneels every two or three minutes, and so long continued and so often repeated have these genuflexions been, that the floor now bears their impression, and his trousers monthly tell the same tale. But this does not satisfy his longings. In his moments of greatest solemnity he prostrates himself, and kisses the earth three times; and this

custom he observes, although he should lie down in the deepest and dirtiest pool of the court-yard. He is wroth when interrupted, and expressed the greatest horror and astonishment when requested to *exhibit* this self-invented ceremony. He would deny the accuracy of this appellation; as the only explanation which he will vouchsafe on the subject is, that he acts after the manner of the prophets, and that he is unhappy when he does not do so. He can repeat large portions of the Scriptures, generally containing the titles and terms of honour and dignity applied to the Supreme Being; but he seems to retain little or no conception of the principles which even these passages contain. Here likewise Veneration is evidently the presiding feeling. His visions are of two kinds,—peaceful and pastoral, or belligerent. He sees from the window of his cell multitudinous herds of cows issue from the clouds in the west, and follow each other with such velocity and in such myriads, that the whole earth is covered, the sky darkened, and the sea filled with their numbers. The procession sometimes consists of larks. The organ of Number, which is considerable in his head, may account for the nature of this apparition; while the species of animals may have been suggested by his original occupations. Four or five times during each day and night he has to witness objects much less interesting to his pastoral imagination. He is molested by evil spirits of all grades, often by their *chief*, with whom he has to wage war; and most manfully is the struggle maintained. At these moments his eye opens, brightens, and becomes fixed; his brow is puckered and lurid; his lips are livid and protruded; he suddenly shrieks out the most hideous imprecations on his antagonist, tosses his arms, and kicks most unmercifully whatever object is nearest. The tug of war is sometimes fierce and protracted; but if approached in his wildest mood, and while howling forth his abusive epithets, he becomes instantly calm, raises his bonnet, and only looks back with a scowl on his tormentor, saying, “It’s a fine day,”—a salutation which he utters even when the snow is up to his chin. His most frightful conflicts occur during the night, when the cries he sends forth would imply that the result is unfavourable. He speaks of these encounters, and of his adversaries, with a degree of terror-struck awe and respect. At the onset his look is that of defiance and vengeance; at the close he expresses reluctance to allude to the matter, kneels down, and says that he is very much troubled. The demon is here conjured up by his Wonder and Cautiousness, which are both considerable; the strife is the result of his large Destructiveness and Combaticiveness. The latter are besides often manifested in quarrels with his fellow-patients, who are for the moment treated as equals, but who,

whenever the storm of passion has subsided, immediately assume in his eyes the aspect of superiority.

Now here is the history of a St. Anthony in the nineteenth century. Here is the same ceremonial piety, and similar satanic conflicts, attended with similar triumphs. The spiritual me-tempsychois appears to have been more extensive in the primitive church. The transformations of the adversaries of him who may deservedly be called the Father of Superstition, were numberless;\* but although W. C.'s habits do not permit us to determine the aspect of his tormentors, that it is sufficiently hideous and loathsome may be gathered from his horror and desperation during the period of possession. In both characters there are clearly the common elements of perfect confidence in the nature of the services of worship performed, and perfect credence in the reality and presence of the phantoms which disease has conjured up. But, viewed through the medium of former opinions, or were the principles upon which these men have acted followed out to their legitimate application, what would be the conclusion of a philosopher? Simply that they have experienced strong, and to them irresistible impulses to worship the Deity, and in obeying these have chosen the most humble and abject postures expressive of submission;—that in repeated acts of this kind they have the delight of religious consolation;—that to other individuals of less intense feelings of adoration, such conduct appears exaggerated, because it is at variance with their own, and because they rest content with and receive consolation from different or less humiliating modes of worship;—but that in these devotees it is the faithful manifestation and exact measure of their frame of mind. Further, these men succumb to the suggestions of Wonder and Cautiousness highly excited, and believe supernatural agencies and appearances. If belief in, or apprehension of, the power of witchcraft, be a proof of madness, we must hold lunacy to have been epidemic in former times. Luther, Calvin, and even greater men, entertained this belief, and lived at liberty the admiration of mankind: it was, in truth, a bit of the orthodoxy of the day. Indeed the superstitious feelings of the former innovator—so his foes, and some even of his friends, allege—went much further. Rejecting as unworthy of credit his successful tilt with the blue-bottle fly, that being the incarnation in which Satan attempted to disturb him during composition, we yet find passages in his works which may be and have been interpreted as affirming the “manifest apparition of the devil to dispute with him.”†

\* See the plate of his Temptation.

† For the controversy on this subject see vol. iv. p. 546 of Scott's Continuation of Milner's Church History.



Be this as it may, there is still another class of pietists whom my patient even more closely resembles. I allude to the more outrageous of the Independent and Fifth-monarchy men who figured during the usurpation of Cromwell. The majority of these fanatics—for some are chargeable with gross hypocrisy—appear to have despised all pleasure apart from the activity of their Veneration, Wonder, Combativeness, and Destructiveness. They engaged incessantly in demonstrations of these feelings : they knelt down in the highways and byways, in solitude and in society, armed with a Bible and a naked sword ; intending by means of the one weapon to conciliate the wrath of God, and by means of the other to repel the attacks of Satan, with whom they asserted they were called upon to maintain a constant and personal struggle. The frightful “wrestling,” of which they so frequently boasted, was unquestionably, in some cases, a term used to represent a mental conflict ; but in others the expressions were too explicit, the general demeanour was too much that of a combatant, and the throes and contortions of the body were too violent, to leave any reasonable doubt that the strife in which they were engaged was by them believed to be real, and sustained, hand to hand, with a substantial antagonist.\*

Under all circumstances, their lives were a compound of the word and body worship which they condemned in others, and of the dark and malicious ferocity of the demon to whom they supposed themselves to be opposed. Yet these men assisted in subverting one throne, and in erecting another of greater power and more tyrannical sway ; and they are even now recognised by many as worthy of a place in the calendar of freedom and religion. Such a title I would be loath to dispute ; but it seems fair to claim that my patient, possessing qualities so identical with theirs, should be enrolled beside them.

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\* For a somewhat exaggerated account of the leaders of these enthusiasts, see the novel of Woodstock.